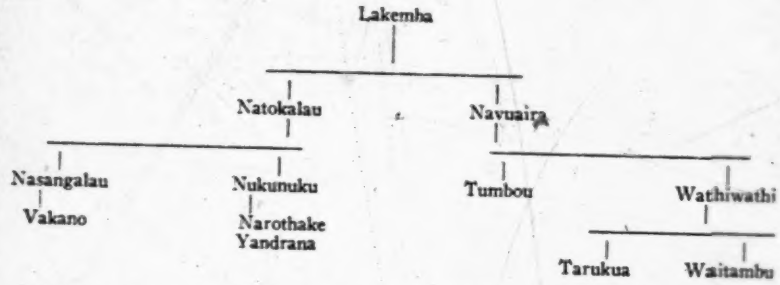
1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

For "the purpose of feasts," Lakemba is divided into two districts: Natokalau, the North; Navuaira, the Southwest or West. The divisions are again divided as follows:



Levuka is not mentioned in these divisions, because its inhabitants stand apart, "They are foreigners," considered as people of Mbau.

Houses of Lakemba are all of Tongan style—oblong in plan with rounded ends, the roofs slightly convex. The houses stand on mounds (*yavu*) of the same shape, the height varying, only a few present day mounds being of any considerable height, notably one which has a double plinth. These mounds, or plinths, play a large part in Fijian tradition.

As a result of a Government regulation, almost every house has attached to it and built on the level ground a little hut which serves as a kitchen and family dining room. With few exceptions, all the houses present their flanks to the beach. In Tumbou, a door is built at the west end, and along the north coast some houses, I believe, [illegible] have their doors in this position. In Wathiwathi, where the [illegible] southwest to northeast, the door is at the southwest end, invariably to one side to avoid a post in the middle of the house. Inferiors enter at this door; superiors, by a door which is usually in the side facing the sea. Some houses have a door on each side.

It is in the *sue*, or lower end of the house, where the cold food is kept, kava is made, and inferiors sit. Usually the most important person sits toward the upper end with his back to the householder's couch, which is erected in the *longgi* (the upper end). This end in some houses is cut off by a curtain of bark cloth or a wooden partition.

The floor is of sand and pebbles strewn with coconut leaves and covered with mats (*tambakau*) about 8 feet by 2 feet, made of half cocoanut leaves plaited and stitched together. Over these again are laid the ordinary mats or *yamba* of *Pandanus* leaves. At the lower end of the house these mats are coarse with very broad strips, but where the more important people sit, the mats are usually finer. An honored guest is provided with a clean

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

The custom of confining a chief's daughter for several months in order to bleach and fatten her (*tambu singa*) is not found in southern Lau. Informants say it existed formerly in Tumbou, Lakemba (Hocart, 15, p. 149), but that it is the "way of the devil" (*vakatevoro*), that is pre-Christian. When I visited the village of Tavuki, Kandavu, the chief's daughter was being thus confined. Natives of Namuka said that the custom was also practiced in the village of Nakasale, Kandavu. 881

Formerly adolescent girls in Lau were tattooed on the thighs, the corners of the mouth, and the fingers. The custom of tattooing (*nggai*) was forbidden by the missionaries, and there are no longer any tattooed women in Lau. 881 304 [797]

Tchosaia of Kambara said that all girls in Lau were formerly tattooed, but Kalo of Fulanga said that only some were tattooed and that of these a number did not finish the whole process because of the pain. Tattooing, according to informants, made the girls grow strong and develop fully. Joana of Kambara said that tattooed women looked better, that their bodies grew stronger and remained firm longer, and that the wrinkles of age were concealed by the design.

The following description of the tattooing process was obtained on the islands of Kambara, Fulanga, and Mothe from aged informants who had not actually witnessed the process but had obtained the description from women who had been tattooed.

The tattooing was begun shortly after a girl's first menstruation by a female specialist (*ndau veinggia, ndau veisau,* or *ndau ni mbatchi*), who had learned the art of tattooing from her mother. She felt the patient's thighs to determine whether or not the girl was ready for the operation. It was initiated by a feast and was performed in three or four installments with a lapse of several months between them. The entire process covered a period of a year or more. If a girl had sexual intercourse either before or during this period the operation would be more painful and the wounds would require more time to heal than otherwise. Two or three girls were usually tattooed in succession.

The operation was performed in a special tattoo hut (*vale ni veinggia* or *vale ni veisau*) located on the edge of the village. This consisted of a lean-to thatched with plaited coconut leaves or an unoccupied sleeping house appropriated for the occasion. The tattoo hut was tabu to men, who jokingly referred to it as the "Black Bottom" (*Sotho Loaloa*). A pointed instrument (*kau ni veinggia*) was used. One to three points consisting of barracuda or shark's teeth, bones of a fish (*sokisoki* or *wai*), or thorns of the lemon tree were attached to a short haft, adz fashion. The pointed end of the instrument was dipped into a black dye made of *sikethi* nut or the pitch of the *yangai* tree. It was then placed on the patient's skin, and struck with a mallet (*tchitolo*) of hibiscus wood. When not in use the instrument was hung in the smoke above the fireplace. After the blood had been wiped away, the wounds were covered with barkcloth. [343] [522]

Dye from the *sikethi* nut was made by the process used today to obtain dye for barkcloth designs. After removing the shells, twenty or thirty nuts were strung on the midrib of a coconut leaflet (*sasa*) and burned over a fire under an earthen pot, on which the black soot collected. On islands like Fulanga where *sikethi* is scarce, it was imported from Mothe, Namuka, Oneata, or Vatoa. To make black powder from *yangai* pitch, lumps of pitch were placed in a fire and the soot from the smoke was caught on a pot above. 881 304 386

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

342 as in the *vale vaka Tonga*). Second, a bundle of three or four pliable rods of *ndongo* or *masamasa* is used in place of the curved wall plate; and the curved roof plate and occasionally the curved purlins are absent. Third, the roof of the rounded end is supported by curved parallel purlins and parallel rafters composed of rough laths like those used in kitchen huts today. Fourth, the thatch is of plaited coconut leaves, not of pandanus; and fifth the house is not raised on a mound. There are three doorways, one at the lower end and one on each side of the house.

High rectangular houses

Old informants say that formerly very high, rectangular houses, called *vale vaka ndawandawa*, were found in Lau. The four supporting posts of such a house, belonging to the chief of Fulanga, are still standing on a mound in Muanaithake village. They are about 8 meters high.

Low rectangular houses

Native agree that the houses of olden times were usually small houses with rectangular ground plan, built on a low foundation mound surrounded by a ring of stones. The mound was not much larger than the ground plan of the house.

MEN'S HOUSES

A house, inhabited temporarily or permanently by men only, is called *mbure* or *mbure ni sa*. Usually each clan has a men's house. Any convenient dwelling house is used, but some villages build permanent men's houses. They do not differ in construction from ordinary dwelling houses.

KITCHEN HUTS

343 The kitchen hut (*vale ni kuro*) is small (about 2 by 3 meters) and not so well built as the dwelling house. It is built like the *vale loiova kathukathu* or like a *vale vaka Tonga* and thatched with coconut leaves. Frequently it consists of a thatched gable roof without walls. The hearth occupies one end of the kitchen. Pots, wooden food bowls, strainers, and graters, as well as tapa board and beaters, are kept in the kitchen.

OVEN SHELTERS

The earth oven shelter (*riri* or *vale ni lovo*) is, as a rule, a thatched, gabled roof without walls. The ridgepole and the two wall plates are supported by forked stakes. Any suitable wood is used. Rough laths of *sitchi* tied with vines, such as *yaumitha* or *tuva*, join the ridgepole and the wall plates. The simple framework is thatched with plaited coconut leaves, tied with vines to the rafters. Some earth oven shelters are simple thatched lean-tos.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

GARDEN HOUSES

Garden produce and tools are stored in a small garden shack called *lololo*. The two parallel wall plates are supported by forked stakes about 1 meter high. Rough, pliable laths of *vetau, mboimboinda, sitchi,* or *uko* are planted in the ground at regular intervals just outside the wall plates. Each one is bent over the wall plates toward the middle of the shack and crossed with a corresponding lath from the other side. Two rough ridgepoles are inserted at the crossing of the laths, one above and resting upon the fork, the other below it. The two crossed laths and the two ridgepoles are tied together at the junction with a vine such as *yaumitha* or *tuva*. The laths are also tied to the wall plates. This framework is thatched from the ridgepole to the ground with plaited coconut leaves tied to the laths with vines.

TEMPORARY SHELTERS

Shelters, called *teisusu* or *yalavolau*, are used for temporary sleeping quarters. They are found at camping grounds far from a village or on uninhabited islands where garden land is cultivated, and where travelers stop over night, or fishermen go for good fishing grounds. The shelters are erected quickly. Two parallel rows of pliable rods of *vetau, mboimboinda, sitchi,* or *uko* are staked at regular intervals in the ground. The rows are about 4 meters apart and 8 meters long. The stakes in one row are bent toward the stakes in the other row, crossed and tied together in pairs, under one and over the other ridgepole as in the garden house. The framework is reinforced by a rod tied to each stake between the ridgepole and the ground. It is covered with thatch made of plaited coconut leaves.

CANOE SHELTERS

Sometimes a shelter of coconut leaves is built over canoes in the process of construction. Unplaited leaves are thrown across two rods held up by four forked stakes.

CHICKEN COOPS

Chicken coops are found in Lau especially on Fulanga. They are built with rectangular ground plan and average about 2 meters long, 1 meter wide, and 1.20 meters high. In one type of chicken coop the walls are made of *walaki* reeds staked upright in the ground and supported from the inside by horizontal rods tied with sennit. Roosting perches and the roof of pandanus thatch rest on these horizontal rods. The roof is supported by pliable sticks curved over the walls and with one end inserted into the ground on each side of the house. In another type of chicken coop the walls are composed of vertical stakes reinforced from the inside by horizontals. They are thatched

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

343 with coconut leaves. Hibiscus bark is used for lashing. The lean-to roof, 235 also thatched with coconut leaves, is supported by diagonal sticks running from a rod, set on three forked stakes on one side of the house, to the ground on the other side.

Inverted, discarded dugouts are also used for chicken coops, especially for breeding nests.

Sennit

283 Sennit (*mangimangi*) is made from coconut of the largest type called *niu mangimangi* (sennit coconut). The nut grows to 55 cm. long. No other types of nuts are used because their fiber is too short and too brittle. Nuts in the half ripe state (*mbu vinaka*) are husked on a husking stake into five equal longitudinal segments. The segments of two nuts are placed in one pile and thus can be counted easily. Stones are heated in an earth oven, spread out with a stick, and the husked segments of 100 to 200 nuts are placed on the stones. The husks are then covered with green leaves and earth. The husks may be left in the oven from three to 21 days. When needed, they are taken out of the oven through a small opening on one side, which is closed after the desired number of segments has been removed. Each segment is freed of its outer husk by hand and then is placed back upward on a block of wood (*rumbi ni mangimangi*) and beaten with a wooden mallet to remove bits of flesh, dirt, and short fibers. The clean, long fibers are allowed to dry in the sun for about three hours. The good fiber is reddish in color. When the dry fiber is pulled apart by hand, it is ready to be braided as follows:

> The braider seats himself cross-legged with a pile of fiber at his side. He takes a little fiber, places it on his upper leg, and with the palm of his hand rolls it into a strand (*ndua i nggilinggili*). The amount of fiber in the strand determines the thickness of the sennit braid. When he has a sufficient number of strands he begins to braid.

The braid is rolled into coils up to 1,000 fathoms long and is stored or exported.

Frequently, instead of steaming the husks in the earth oven, the segments are boiled (in salt or fresh water) in old kerosene tins for several hours. Then they are beaten and dried. They turn a reddish white color, and are strong and tough. This method was used frequently when the copra industry was at its highest in Lau and kerosene tins were readily available.

293 White sennit, made by soaking the husk segments in salt water for about 386 two months, is neither stronger nor more brittle than baked sennit. Black [824] sennit—which is recent in Lau, according to the natives—is produced by boiling a coil of baked sennit with leaves of *sinu* (*Excoecaria agallocha* or *Phaleria disperma*), *kalatchimbuthi* (*Acalypha insularis*), *tatavola*, and *mbele*. The natives say that if any one of these leaves is omitted the dye is not fast.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

132 Kambara is situated about 19 degrees south of the equator, and so has a tropical climate. During the dry season, which lasts from April to October, the cooling southeast trades blow regularly and the seas are calm. Most of the lively canoe traffic between the islands is carried on in these months. Although the temperature rarely falls below 70° the thin-blooded natives frequently shiver with cold, especially after the sun goes down. The remainder of the year is rainy and hot with irregular winds, especially during the "hurricane" months of January, February and March. At this time few native crews venture in canoes beyond the protecting reefs, for a small black cloud on the horizon can suddenly develop into an ugly squall which rips a mat sail and tosses a canoe about like a toy boat on a mighty ocean.

There is a difference in climate between the west and the east sides of Kambara. The east side is cooler and less humid than the west on account of the southeast trades. This may in part account for the greater energy and productivity in craftsmanship shown by the people of Undu and Tanggu compared to those of Tokalau and Lomatchi. During the hot season in Tokalau the temperature in my native hut, which had a sheet iron roof, averaged 90° F. at seven in the morning and 102° at two in the afternoon.

123 514 [343] In the heat of the day we frequently worked under a pavilion roofed with plaited coconut leaves, near the beach, in the hope of catching whatever slight breeze might be playing along the shore. There was considerable amusement over selection of a site for this pavilion. During the first weeks in Tokalau I chose the coolest spot along the beach and requested that the pavilion be built there. Located some distance from the village, the place was sheltered by palms and brush. At this time I still had the naive notion that I could arrange a little privacy for interviews with informants who frequently hesitate to speak in the presence of others, and also for the few precious leisure hours I had to enjoy this "South